

Student Lending Analytics (SLA) applies a rigorous and analytical methodology that relies on a multitude of sources including mystery shops, publicly available information disclosed in conference calls and company filings with the SEC and borrower surveys conducted by SLA at various universities. In addition this year, SLA invited lenders to provide detailed information on their private loan portfolios to assist in the evaluation process. Several lenders voluntarily provided this data to SLA which was useful in analyzing projected loan costs, which was the primary criterion used in the evaluation process.

The SLA approach to rating lenders has been used by financial aid offices at such universities as Yale University, University of Pennsylvania, Babson College, Scripps College and the University of San Diego. SLA receives no compensation of any kind from any of the lenders appearing on this list, ensuring that you are receiving unbiased recommendations.

SLA's goals with this rating system: to help students and families make the most informed decisions on private loans and to save you money! The lenders rated by Student Lending Analytics were selected based on the frequency with which they appeared on schools' preferred lender lists based on SLA's research of over 400 schools in August of 2009. SLA also added new private loan offerings, such as credit union products, based on their competitive rates.

The appearance of a lender on this list does not in any way imply an endorsement of their loan products. Be aware that lenders may not approve your application based on you and your cosigner's creditworthiness, the educational institution that you attend or other factors. SLA will continue to modify this list based on consumer feedback and evaluation of alternative loan products. **In any case, SLA recommends applying for a loan from multiple lenders.** SLA research found a gap of 6% from high to low rates offered to both average and strong credit borrowers.

Student Lending Analytics utilizes a five star system to rate lenders. SLA considers multiple factors in the development of their student loan ratings, with expected loan cost being the most important. The factors evaluated include: expected loan cost, borrower benefit savings, loan fees, flexibility of repayment options and approval rates gleaned from SLA surveys of student borrowers.